



THE STORY OF

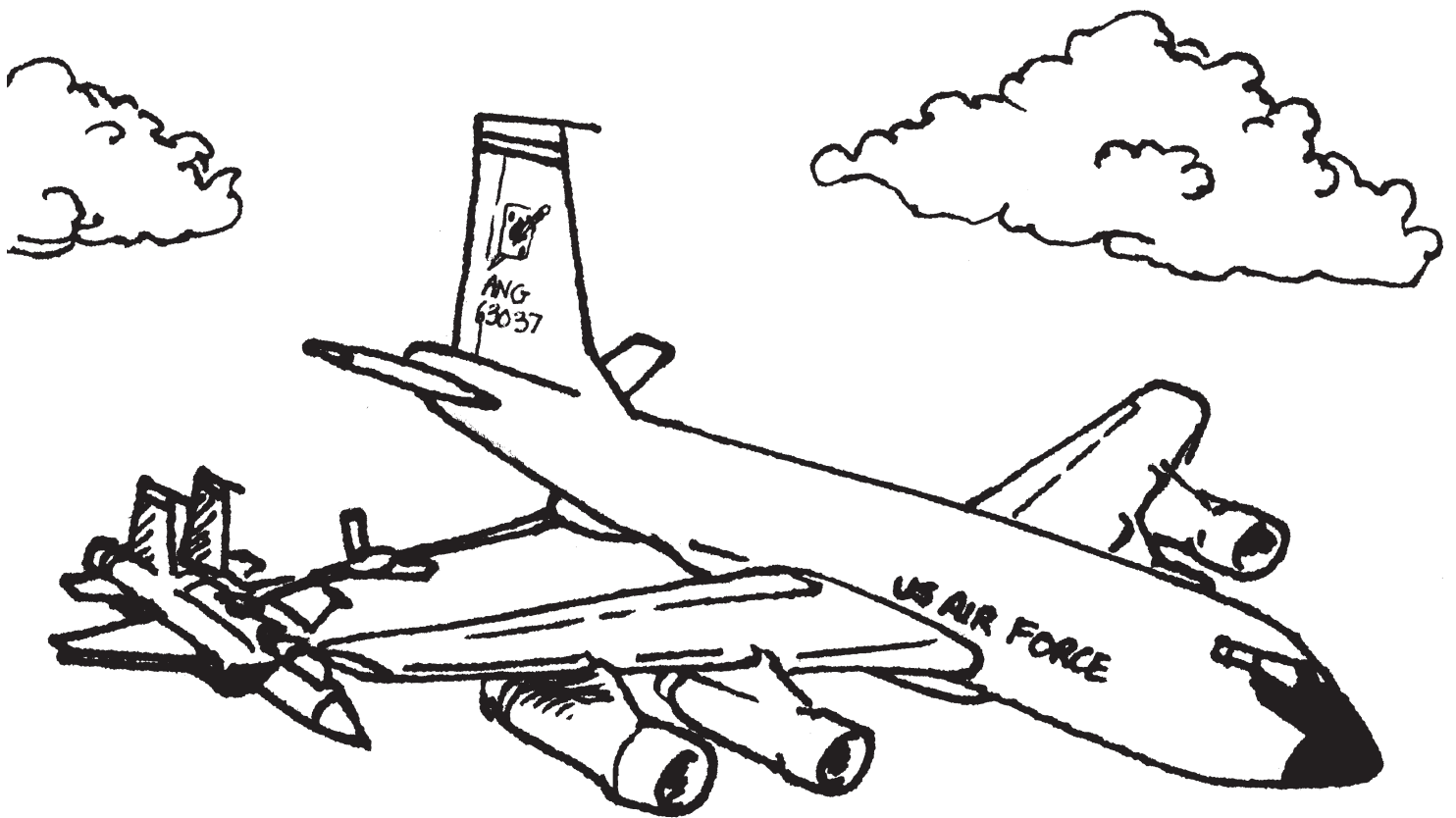
THE 141ST

AIR REFUELING

WING

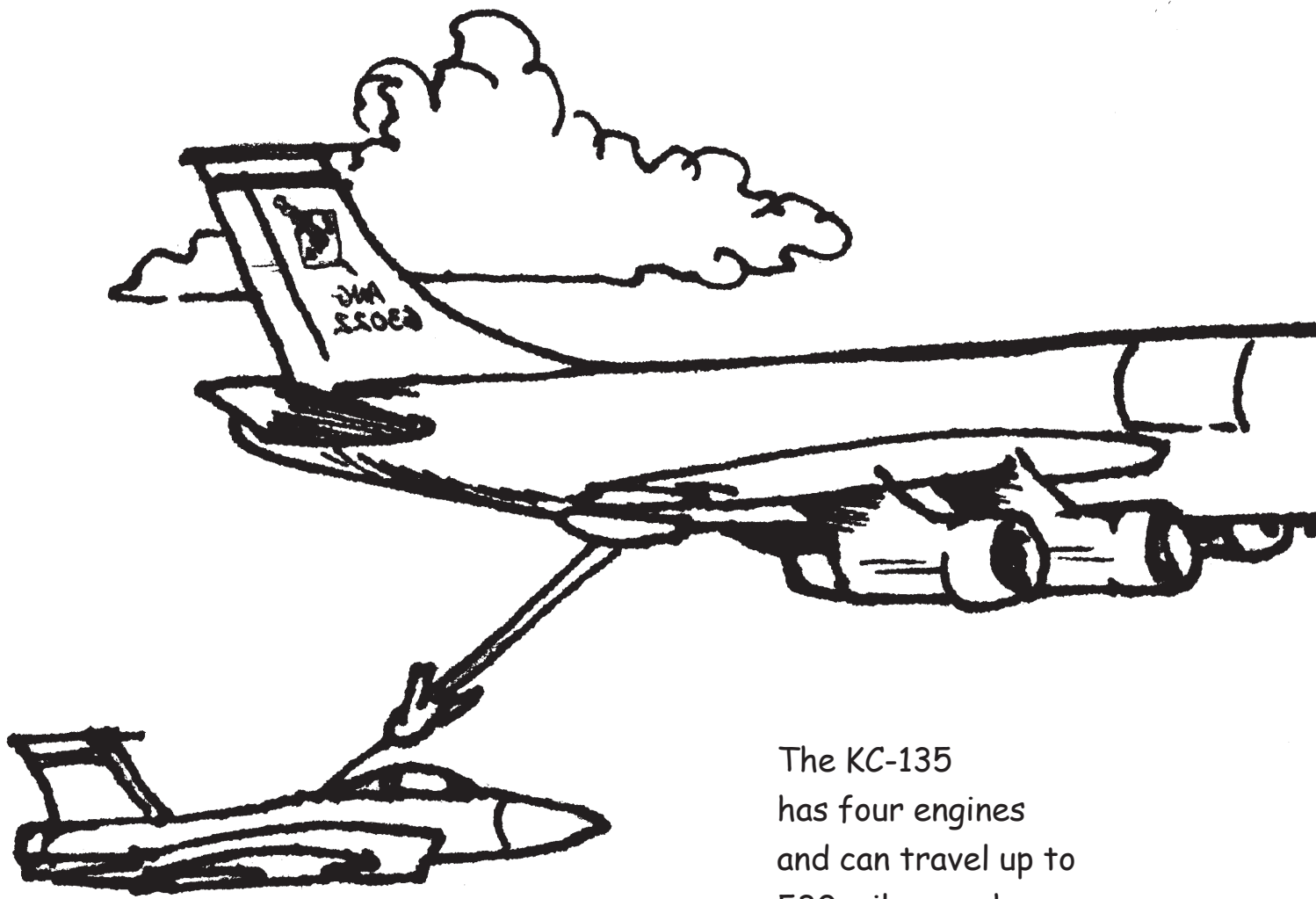


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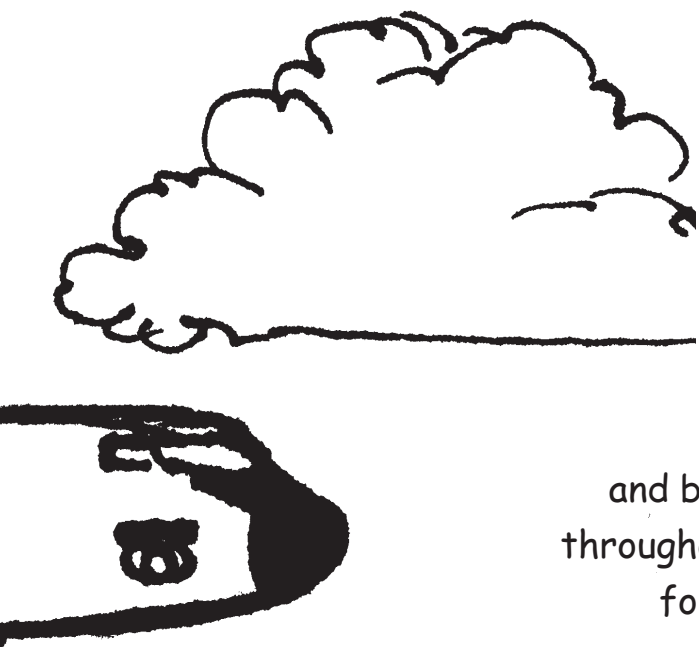


The 141st Air Refueling Wing
of the Washington Air National Guard
flies KC-135E Stratotanker aircraft
and will be converting to KC-135R's.

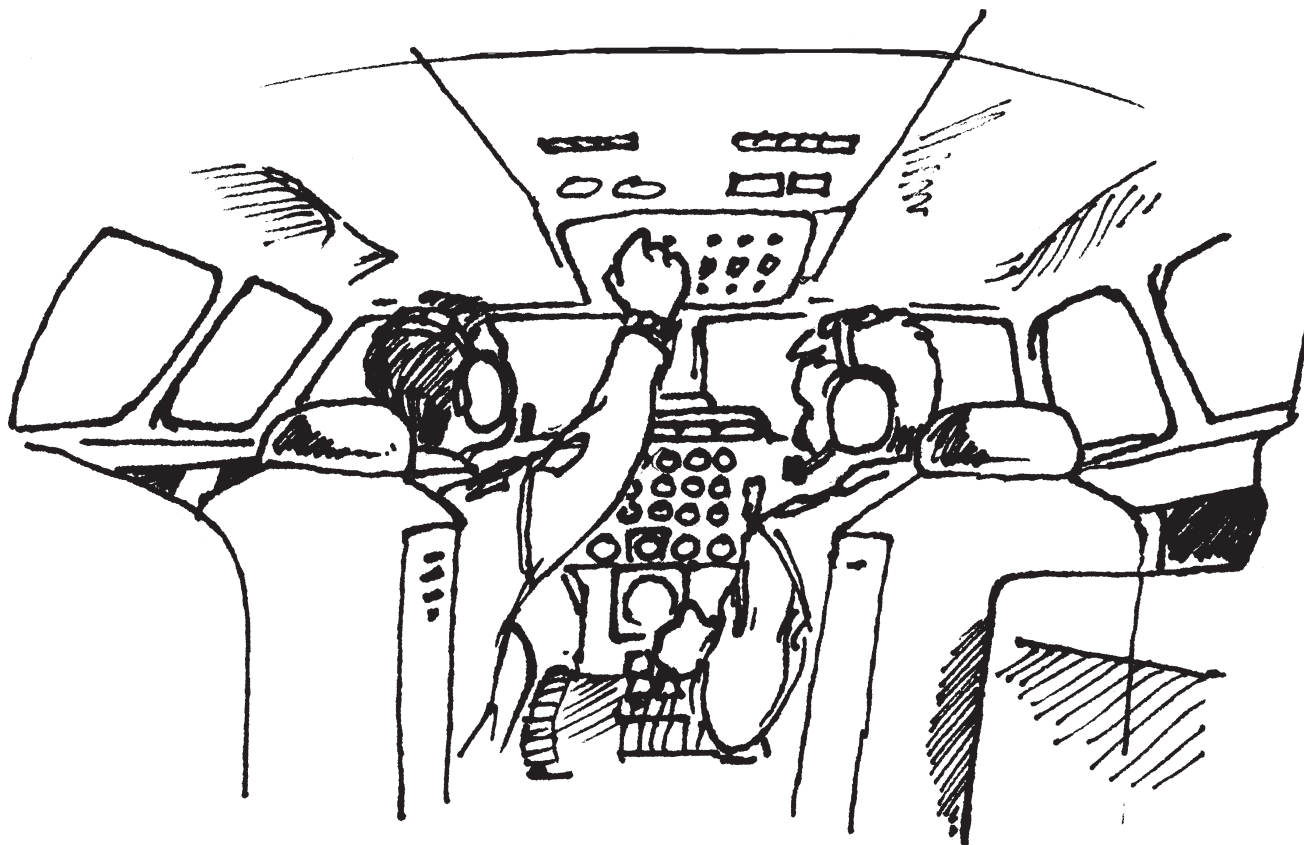
The primary mission of the unit
is air refueling. The KC-135 also
refuels other Air Force, Navy,
Marine Corps, and allied aircraft.



The KC-135 has four engines and can travel up to 530 miles per hour. KC-135's were built in the late 1950's by Boeing. Its civilian counterpart is a Boeing 707.



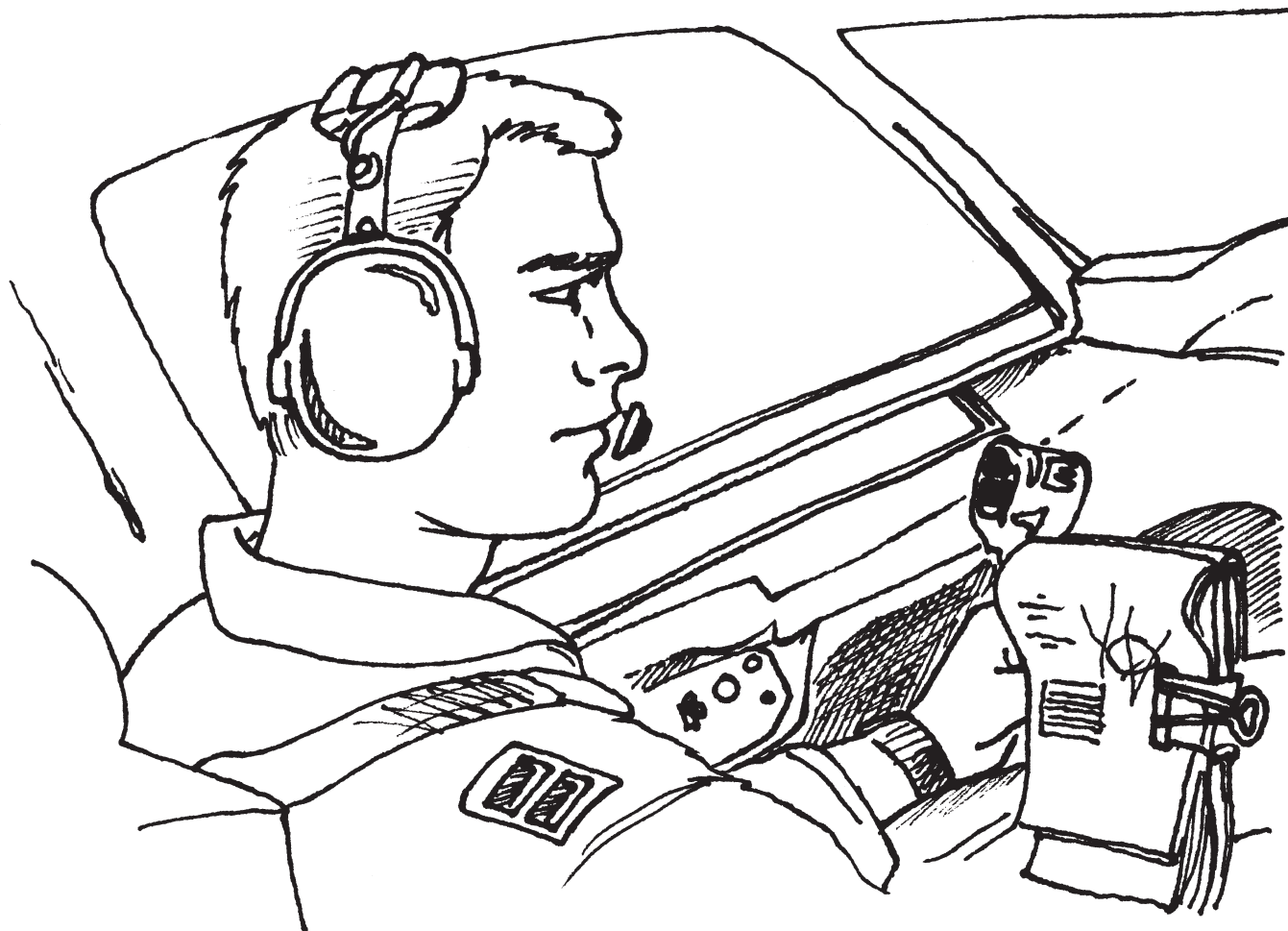
Currently, it takes four air crew members to fly a KC-135—a pilot, co-pilot, navigator, and boom operator. A current change is under way throughout the Air Force that will eliminate the need for navigators. Instead, navigational computers such as the global positioning system will be used.

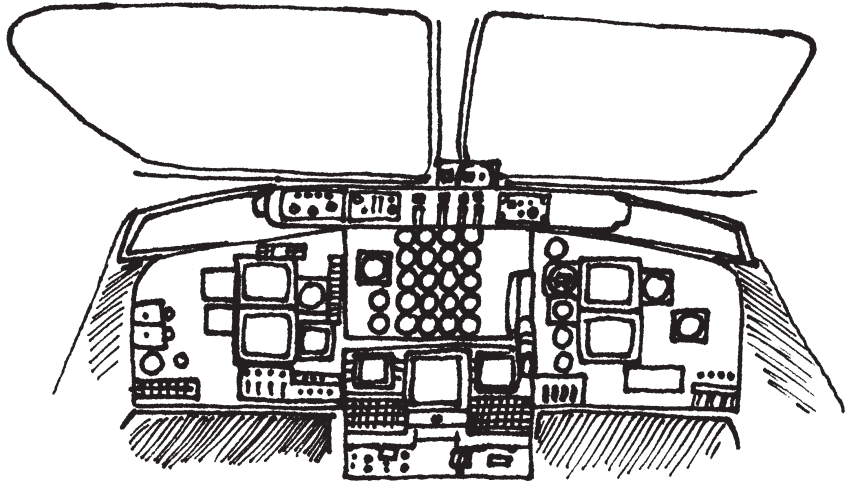


All crew members wear flight suits. They are green and the material is fire-resistant to protect the air crew in an emergency.



The pilot sits in the left seat in the cockpit. He or she is known as the aircraft commander. This person is in charge of the aircraft. The co-pilot sits in the right seat and can take the pilot's place, if necessary.



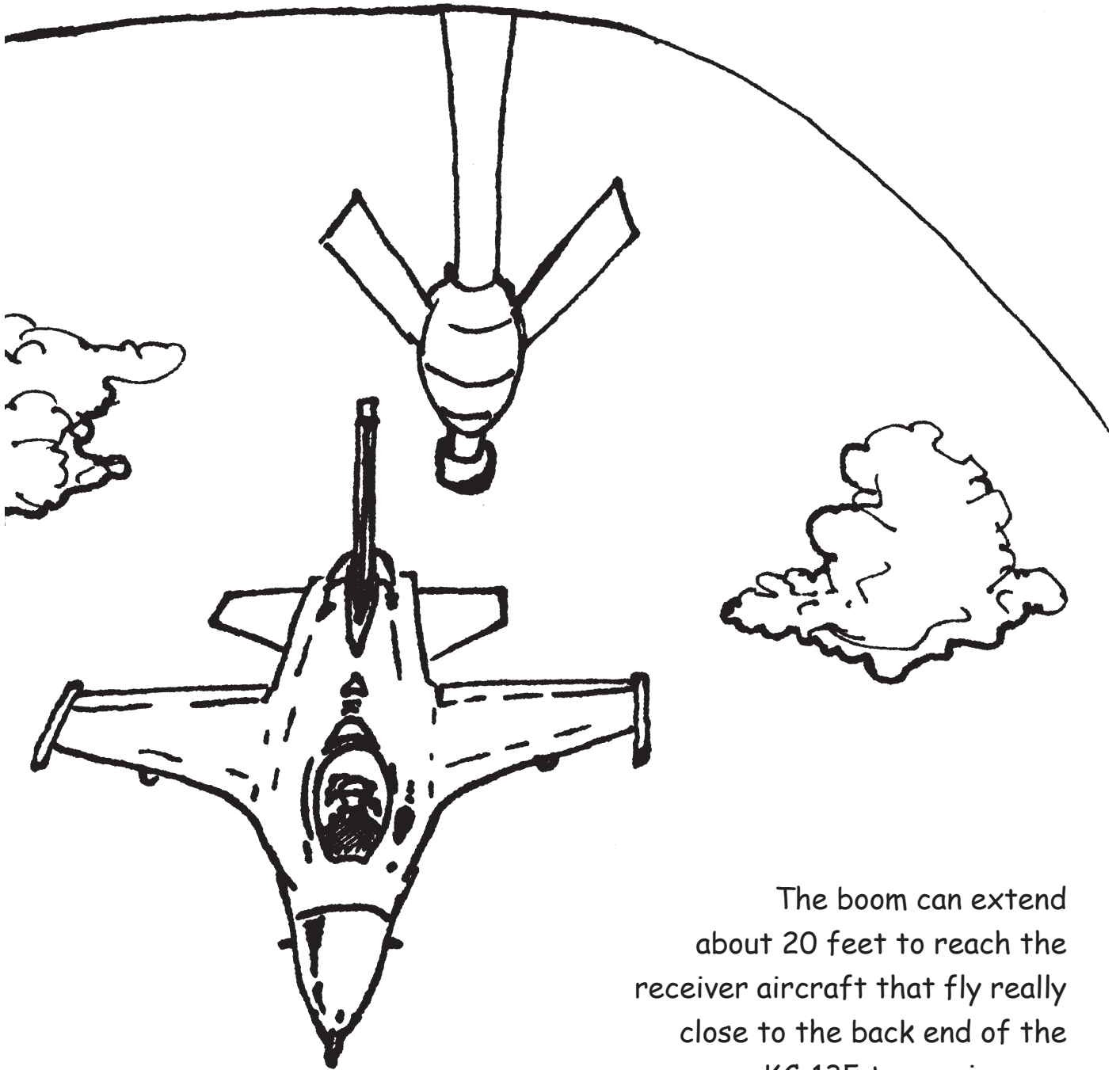


The navigator sits behind the co-pilot and faces the right side of the plane in an area that looks like a desk with a map on top of it. He or she uses navigational equipment to direct the plane to its destination. The cockpit has been redesigned with new instruments called the Pacer Crag System (shown above). The Pacer Crag allows the plane to be flown without a navigator.



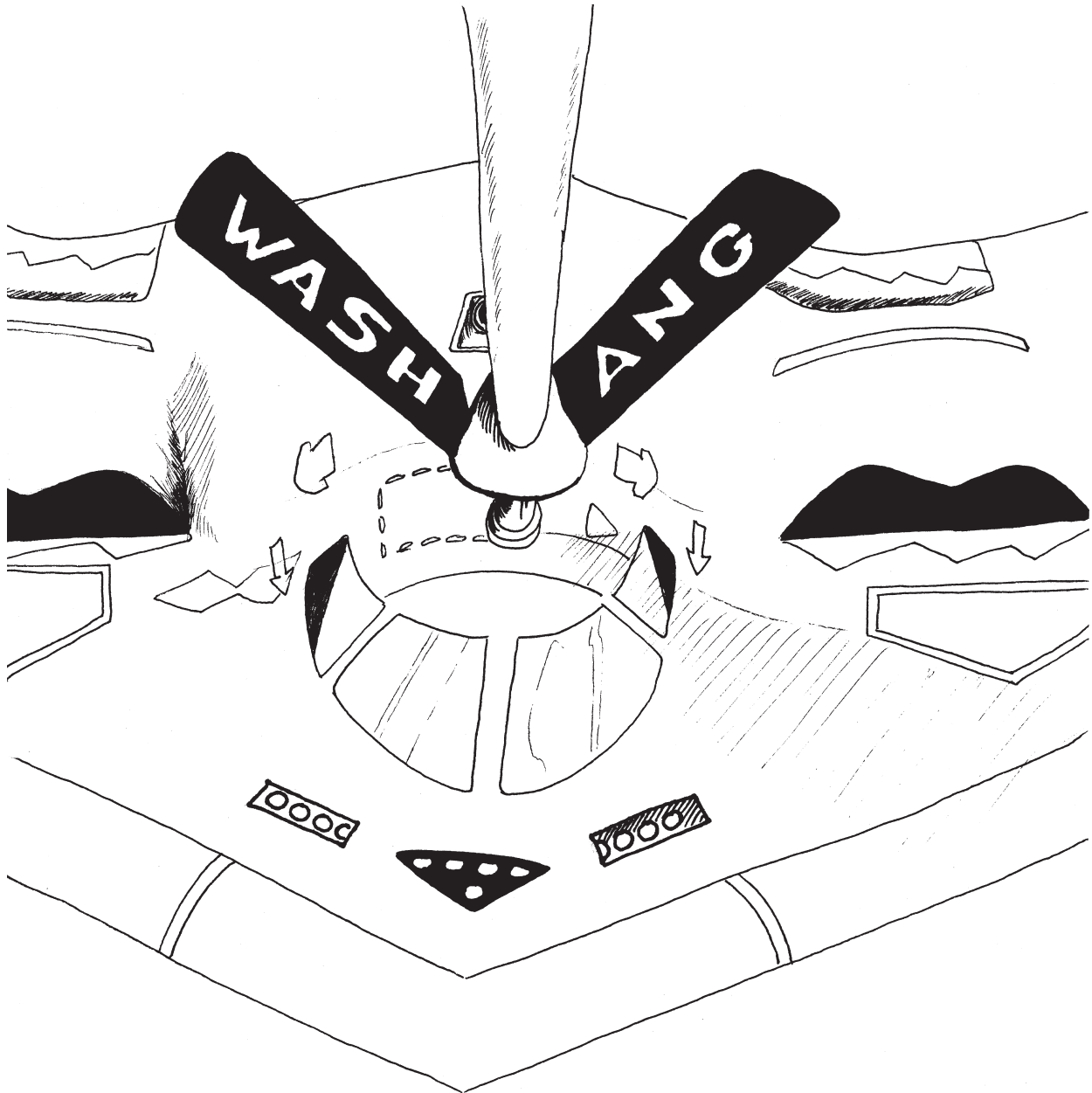
The boom operator is the person who pumps the gas from the KC-135 to other airplanes. He or she lies in the back of the airplane on his or her stomach in a special place called a boom pod. The boom operator looks out a small window at the back of the plane beneath the tail and guides the boom to deliver gas to other airplanes. All this is done while flying thousands of feet above the earth!

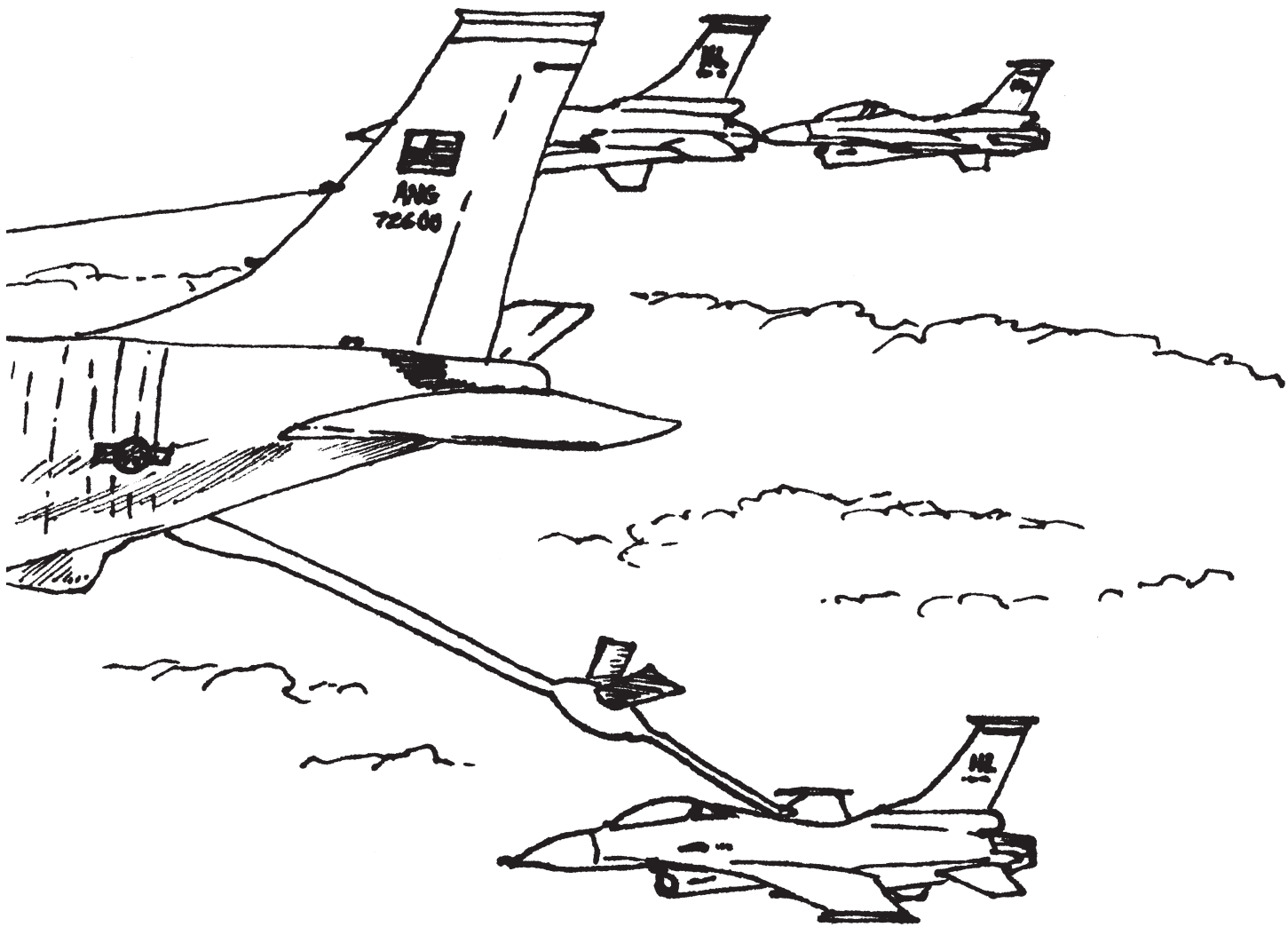




The boom can extend about 20 feet to reach the receiver aircraft that fly really close to the back end of the KC-135 to receive gas.

The KC-135E is giving gas to this B-2 Stealth bomber thousands of feet up in the sky. The B-2 doesn't have to land to get gas. Instead, by getting more fuel from a KC-135 it can keep flying. With help from a KC-135, combat aircraft can spend more time in the air rather than landing to get gas.





Sometimes a KC-135
refuels several aircraft flying together.
This is called a cell. While the first aircraft is getting refueled,
the others line up next to the KC-135's left wing
like with these F-16's. When each aircraft
is finished receiving gas it moves next to the KC-135's right wing.
The aircraft keep rotating until all have received gas
and are on the right side of the KC-135's wing.

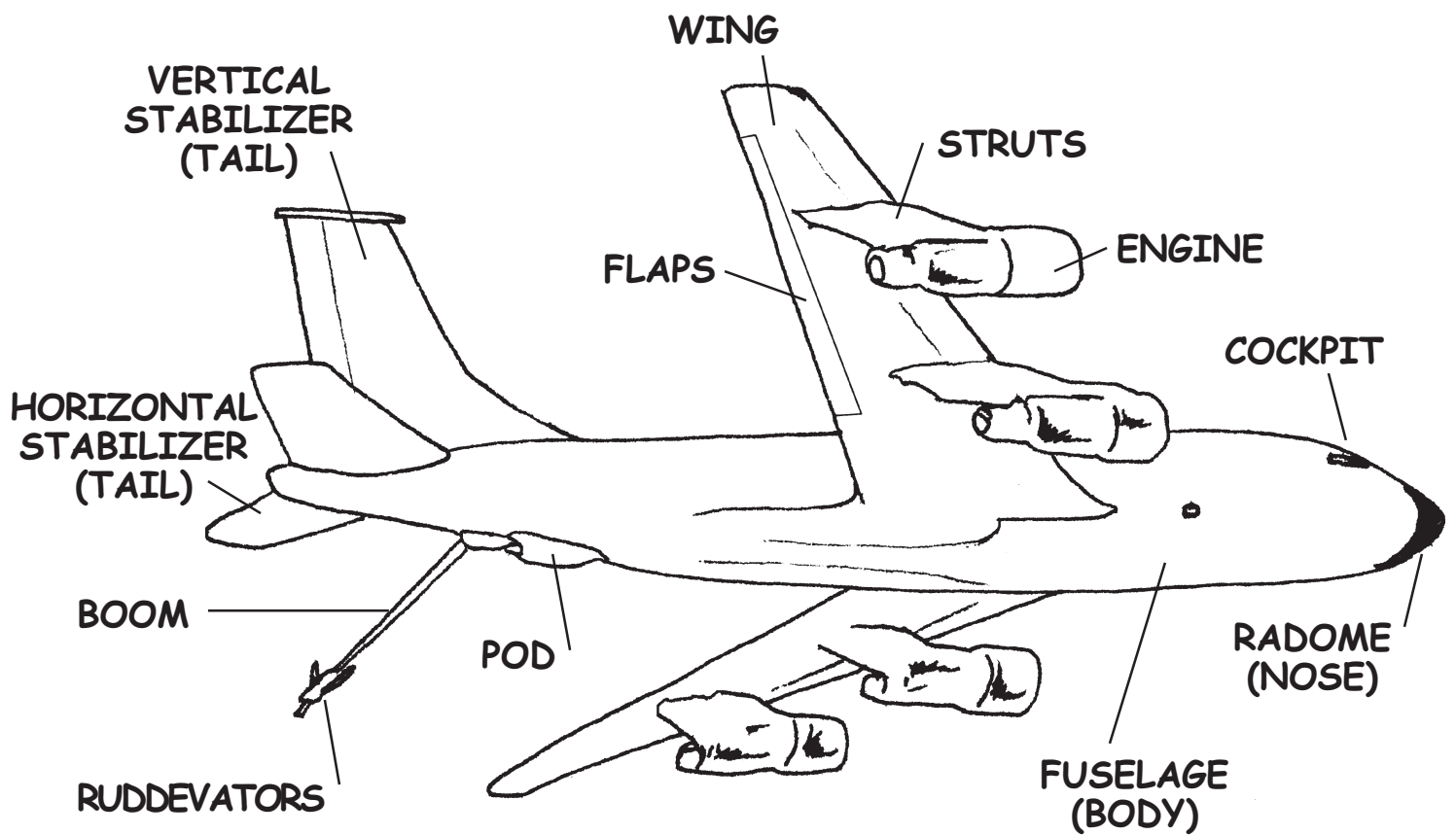


KC-135's can carry 200,000 pounds of airplane fuel. This fuel is carried in the "belly" or bottom part of the plane and in the wings.

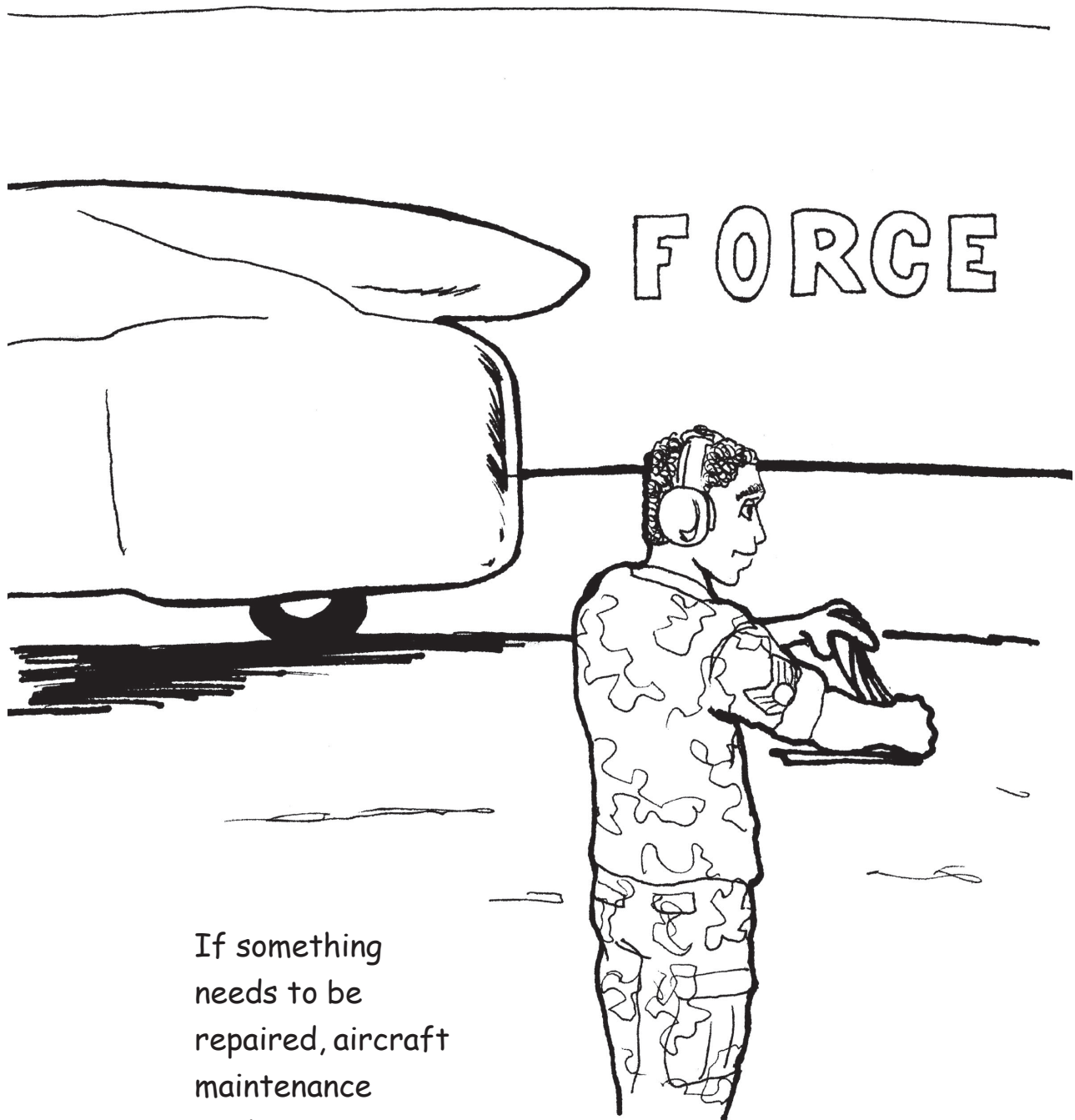
Besides refueling other aircraft,
the KC-135 can be used to
transport military passengers.

The seats are different from
those on civilian airliners. Cloth
seats fold down from the sides of
the plane. Cargo can also be
carried on a KC-135 by tying it
down to the floor.



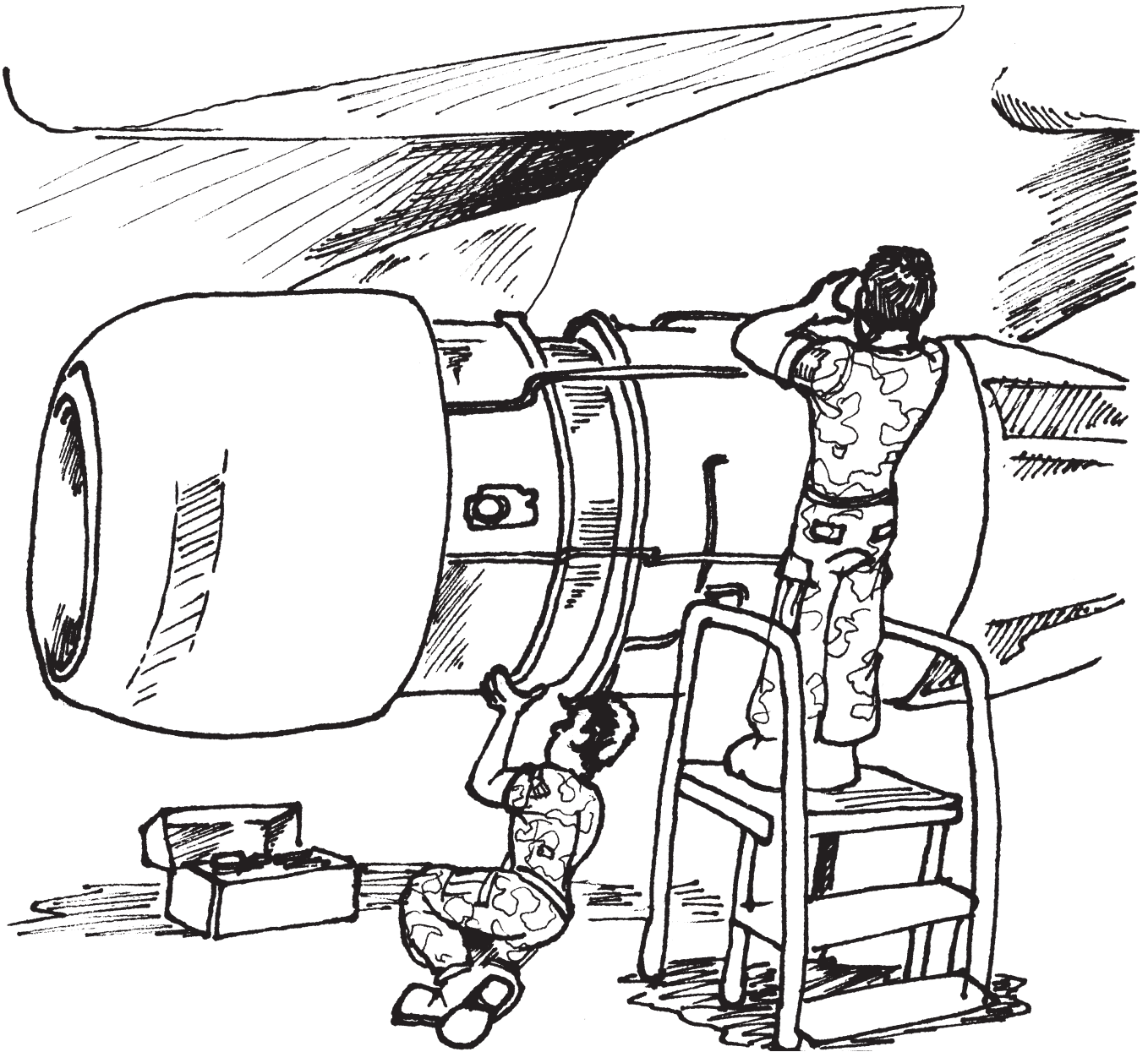


This is a diagram of the different parts of a KC-135.

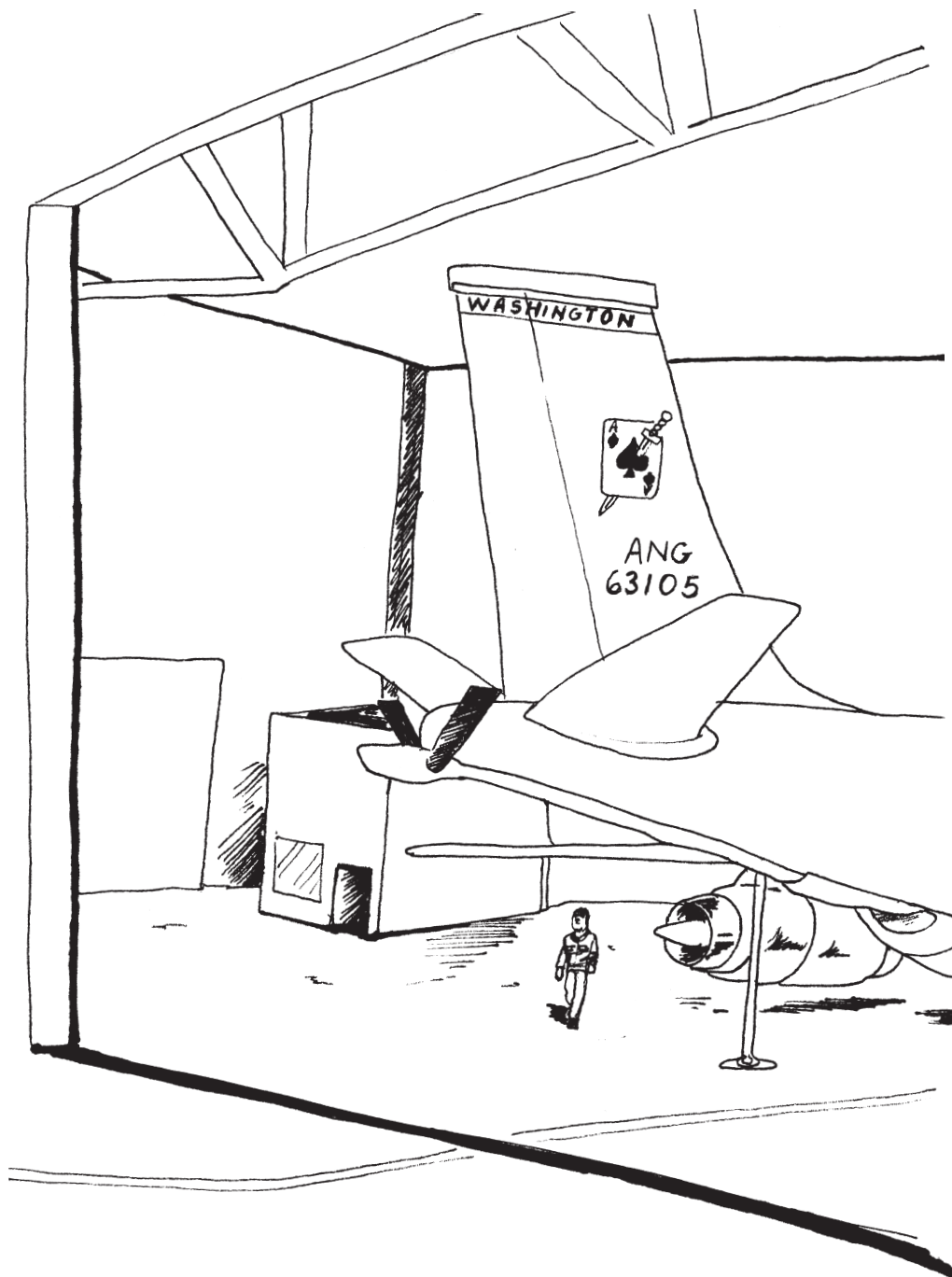


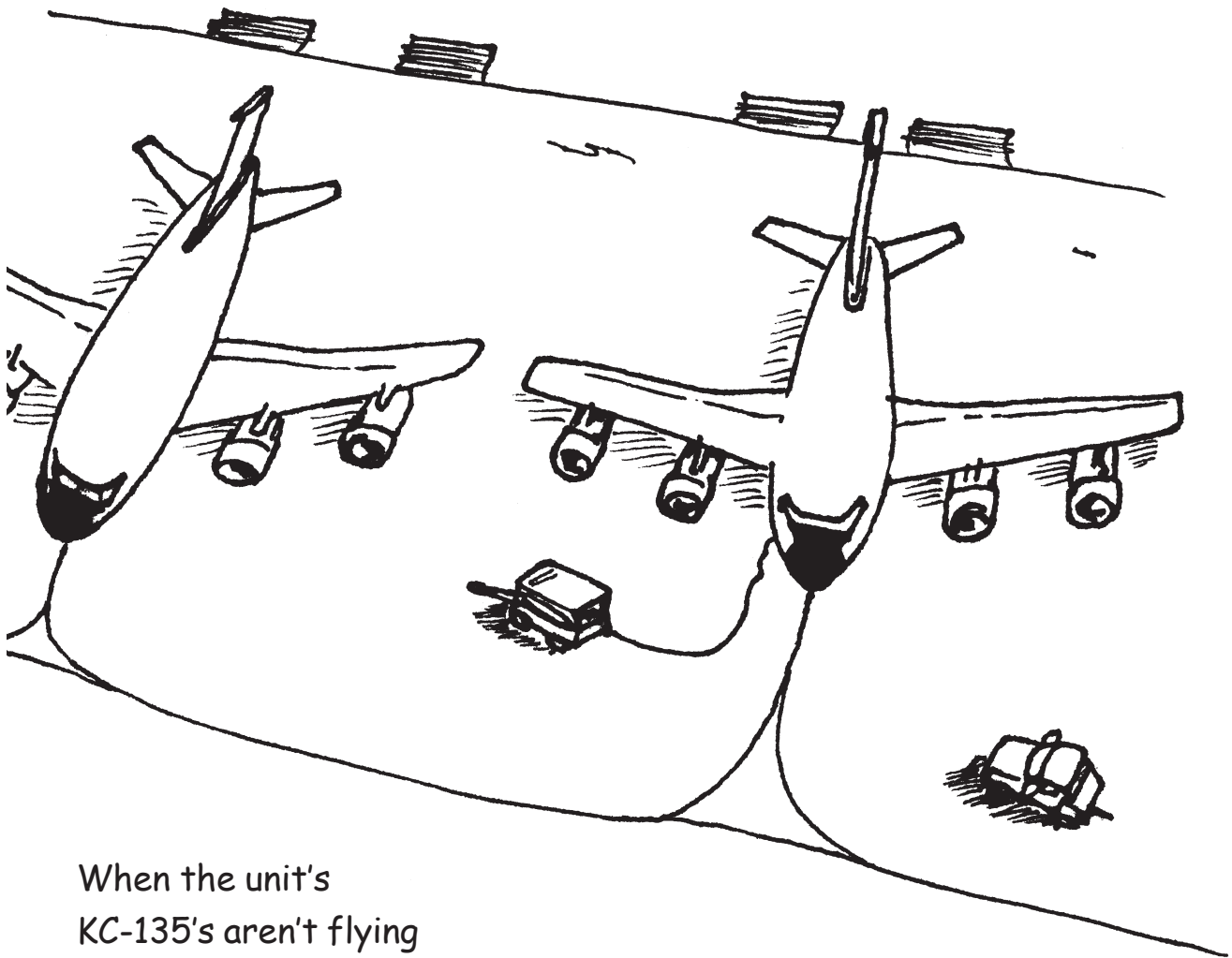
If something
needs to be
repaired, aircraft
maintenance
workers are
trained to work on
the airplane.

It takes a lot of people to take care of a KC-135.
Each aircraft has an assigned crew chief
to make sure the airplane works well
before each flight. Crew chiefs have a list
of all the things to check.



If a KC-135 needs maintenance work,
it is driven into a special shop
called a hangar that is big enough
to put the entire plane inside.



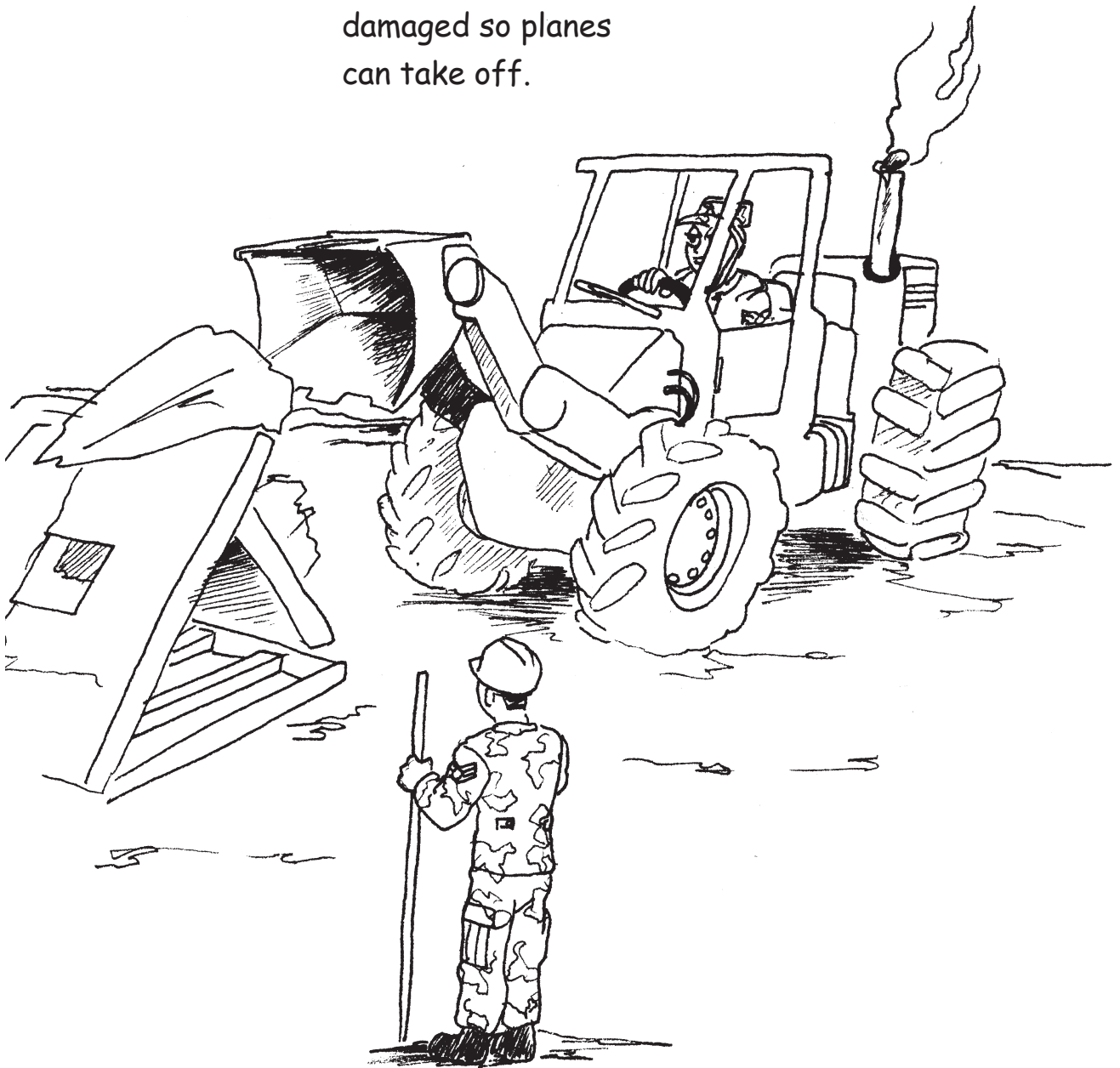


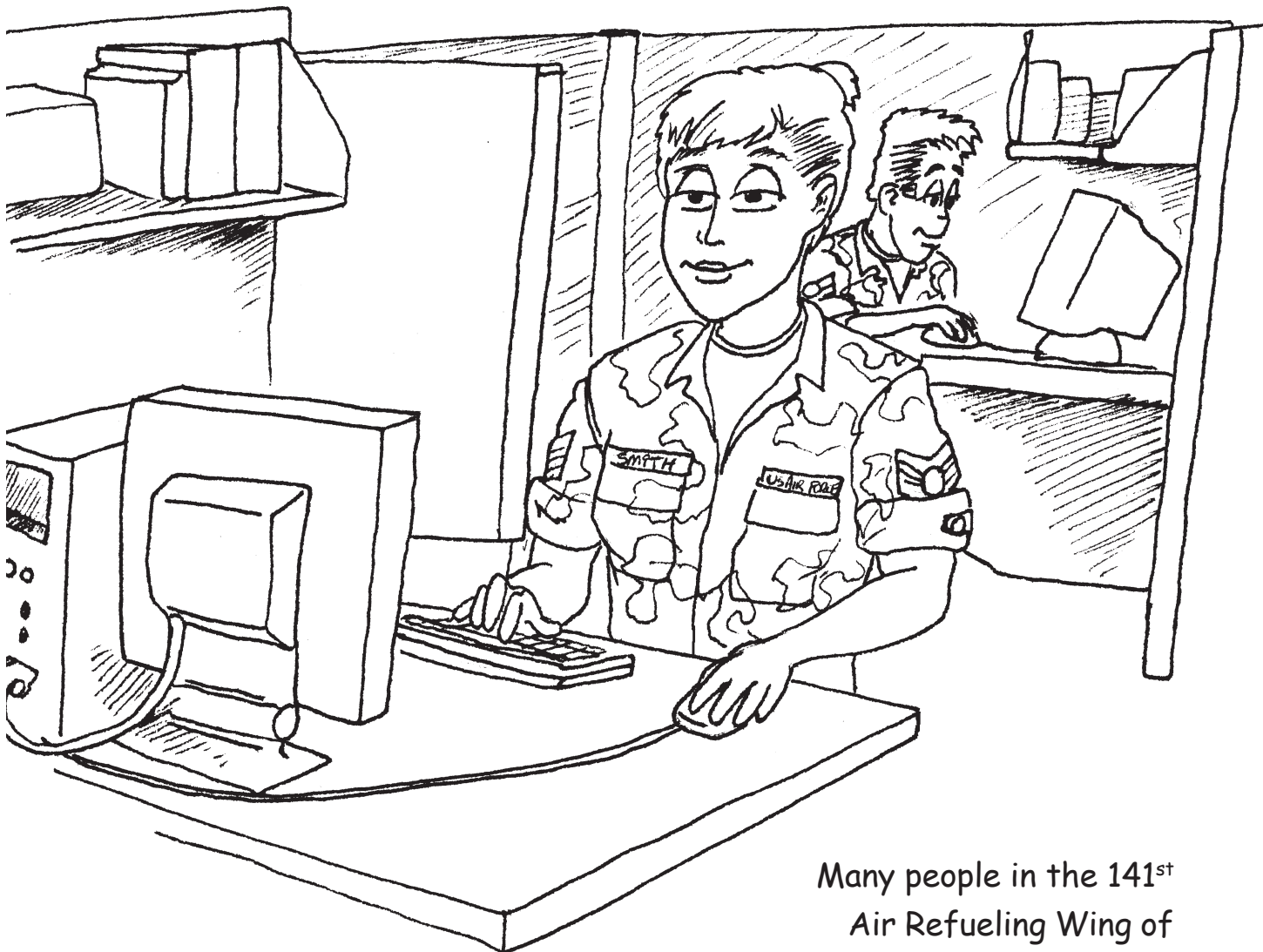
When the unit's
KC-135's aren't flying
or having maintenance,
they are parked
on the flight line.

It takes a lot of people to support a refueling mission.
Besides aircrew and aircraft maintenance people,
many other people work to keep the planes ready to fly.
Security police help guard the planes at home
and when the planes land in a foreign country.



Civil engineering
workers repair
runways if they are
damaged so planes
can take off.





Many people in the 141st
Air Refueling Wing of
the Washington Air
National Guard work in
offices using computers
to keep track of flying
schedules, the money
spent, records of
military members, and
supply items.

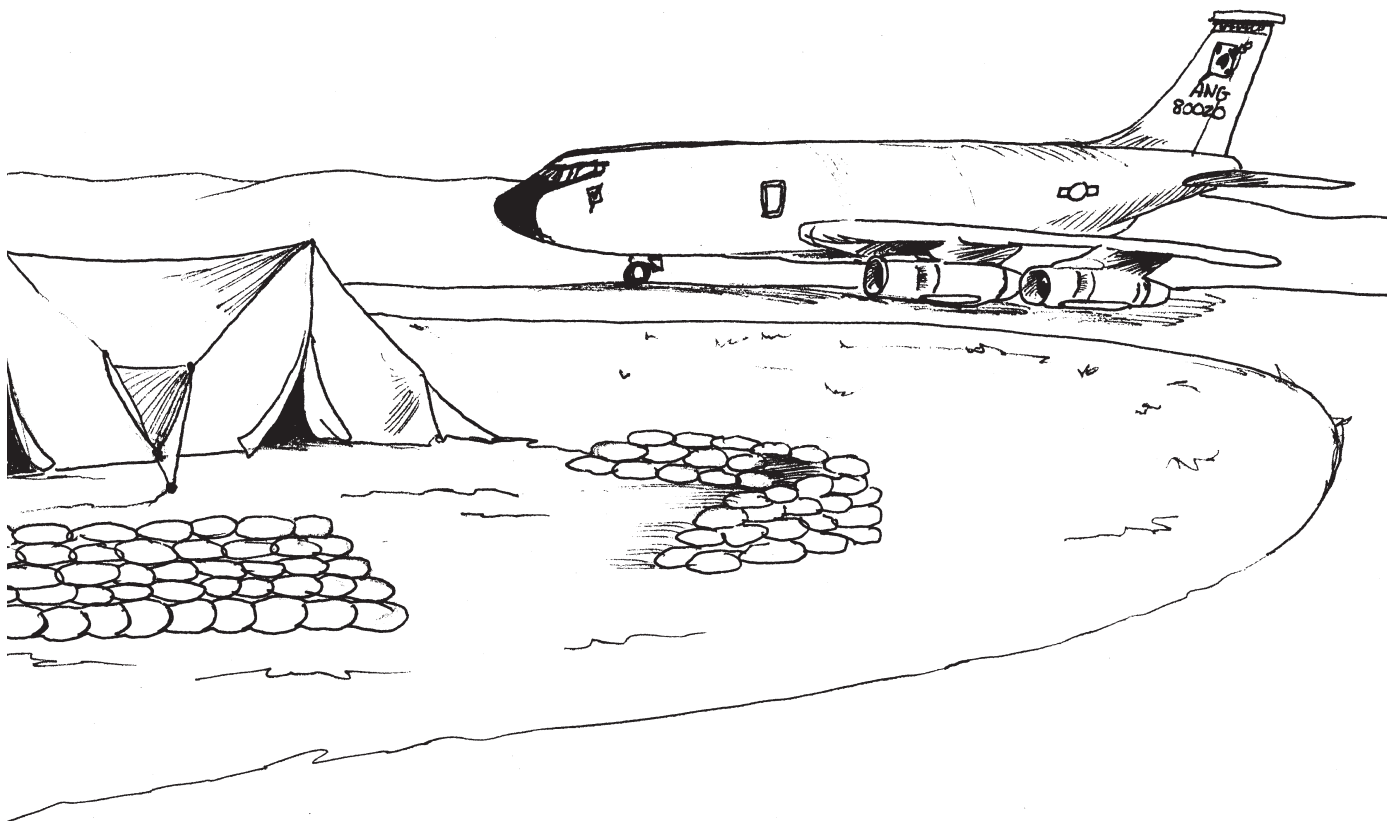
Some of the members of the unit are health care professionals and are assigned to the 141st Clinic. Guard members receive physicals and shots to make sure all members stay healthy.





The unit even has a band. The band is known as the Air National Guard Band of the Northwest. The band has traveled all over the world performing for military and civilian audiences.

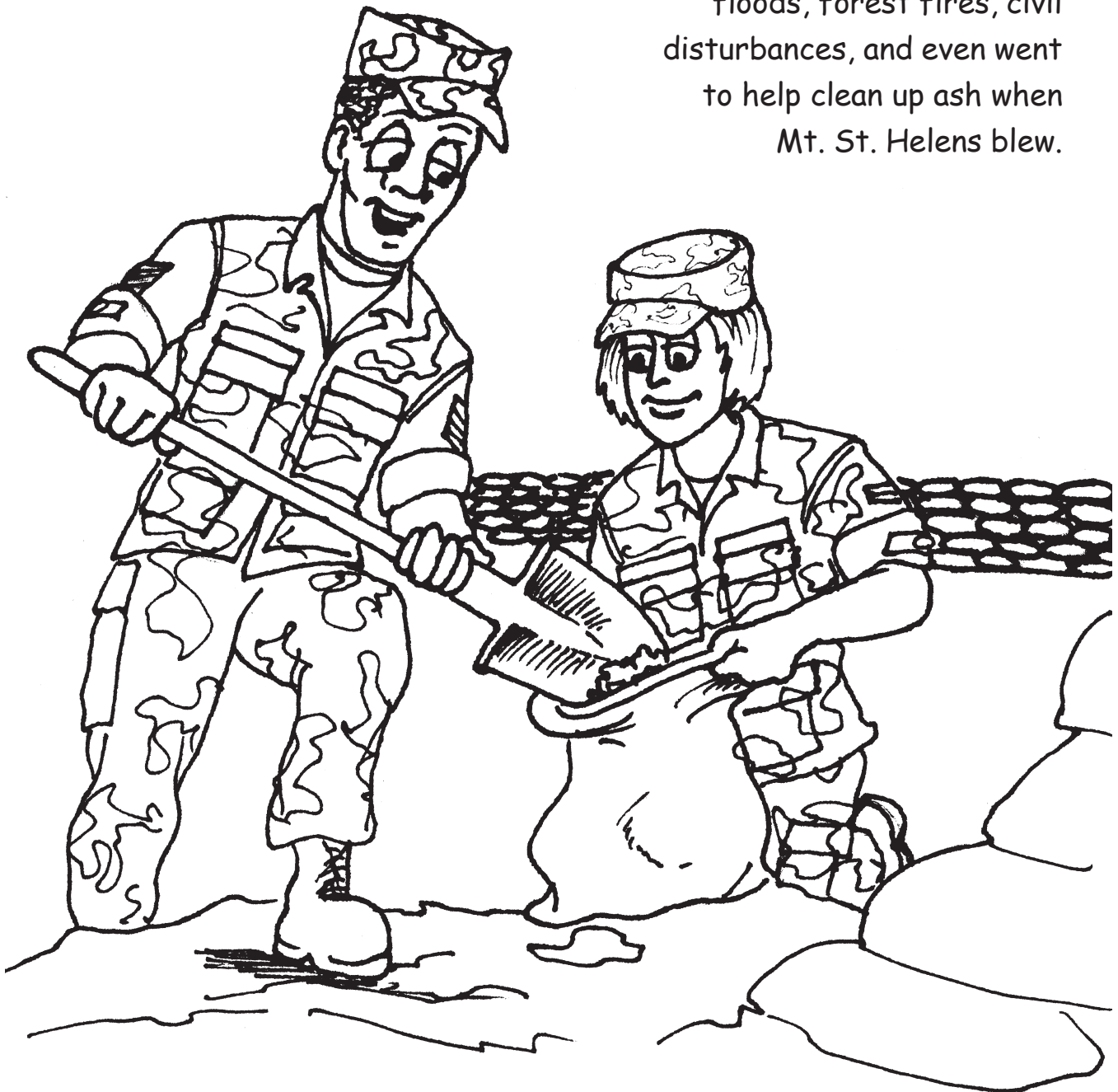
Sometimes many of the workers in the unit need to go to other countries or other states to do their jobs. This can be for a deployment of a few weeks or longer if needed. During Desert Storm in 1990 and 1991, over 300 people and eight KC-135's belonging to the unit participated. Some of the people went to Cairo, Egypt, and some went to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In 1999, 130 members and KC-135's from the unit went to Budapest, Hungary, to support Operation Allied Force.



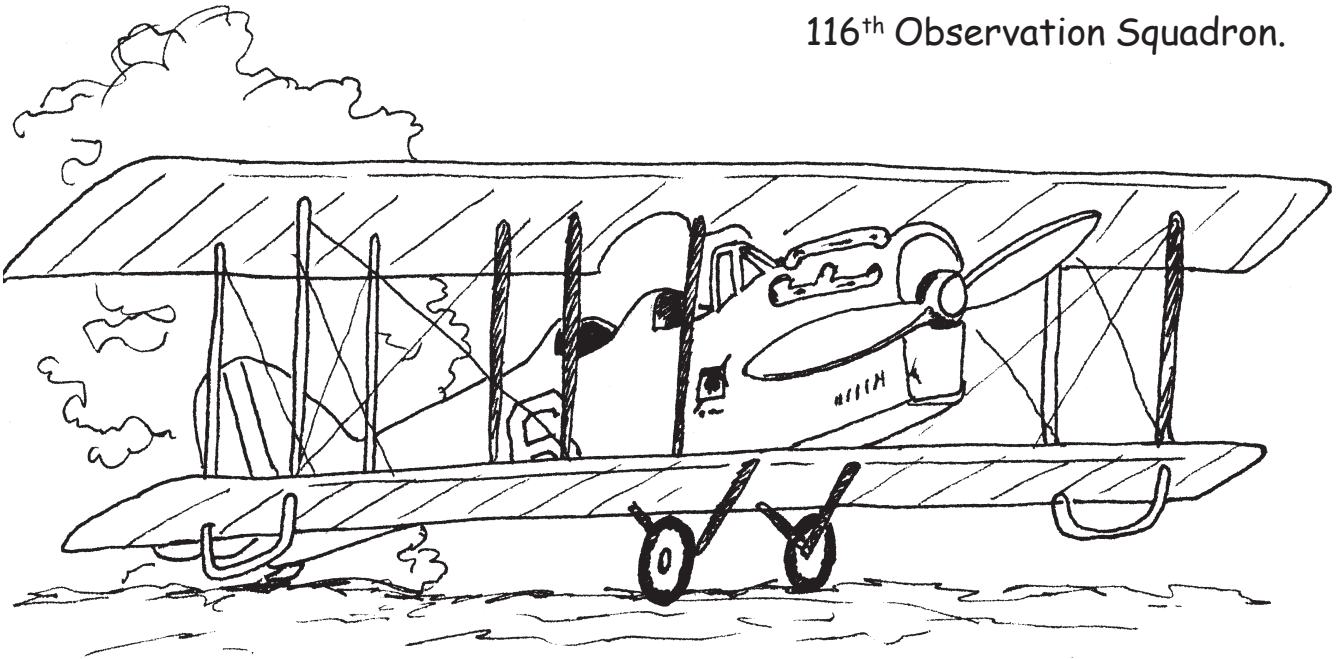
Sometimes the members of
the 141st ARW live in tents
while they do their jobs.



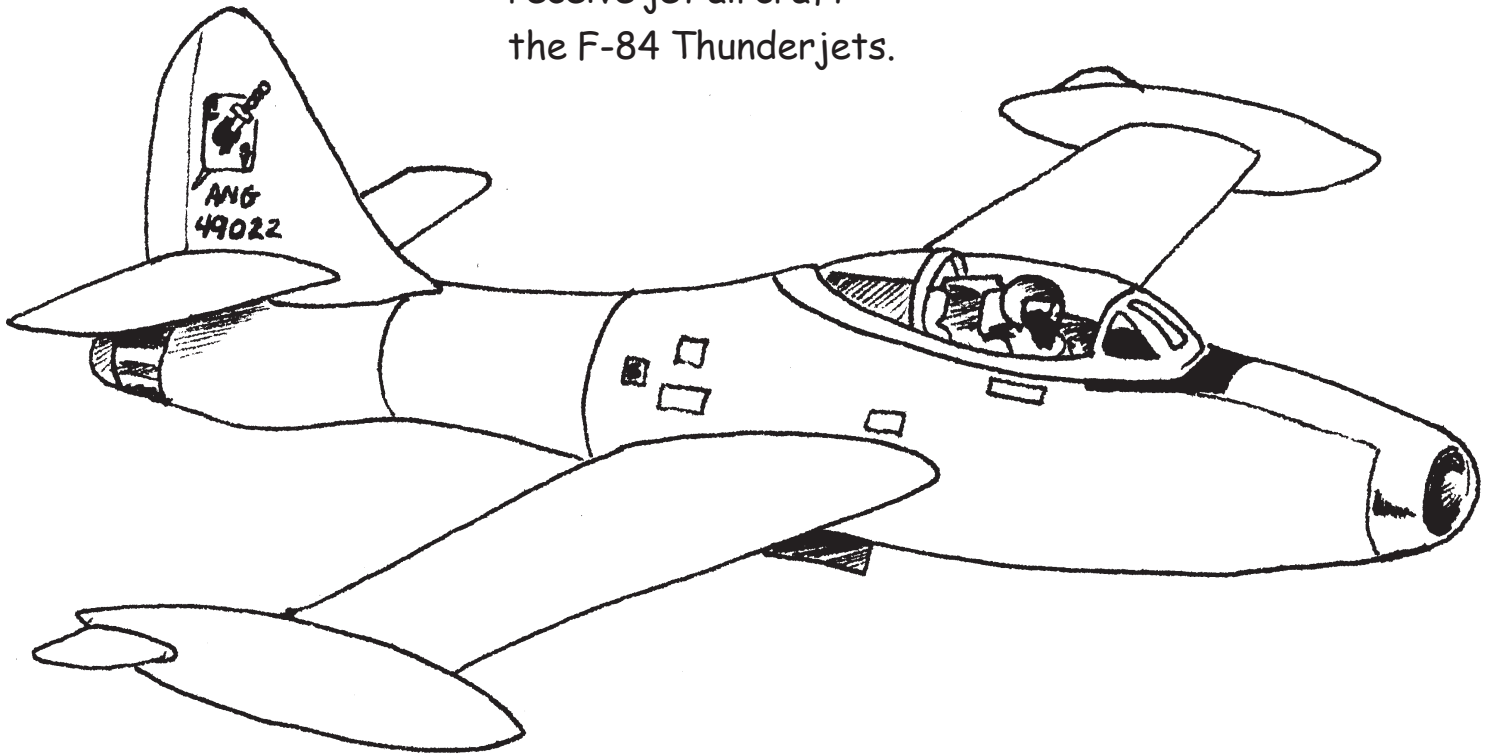
Sometimes, members of the 141st Air Refueling Wing have been called to duty by the governor to support the state of Washington. Guard members help during floods, forest fires, civil disturbances, and even went to help clean up ash when Mt. St. Helens blew.

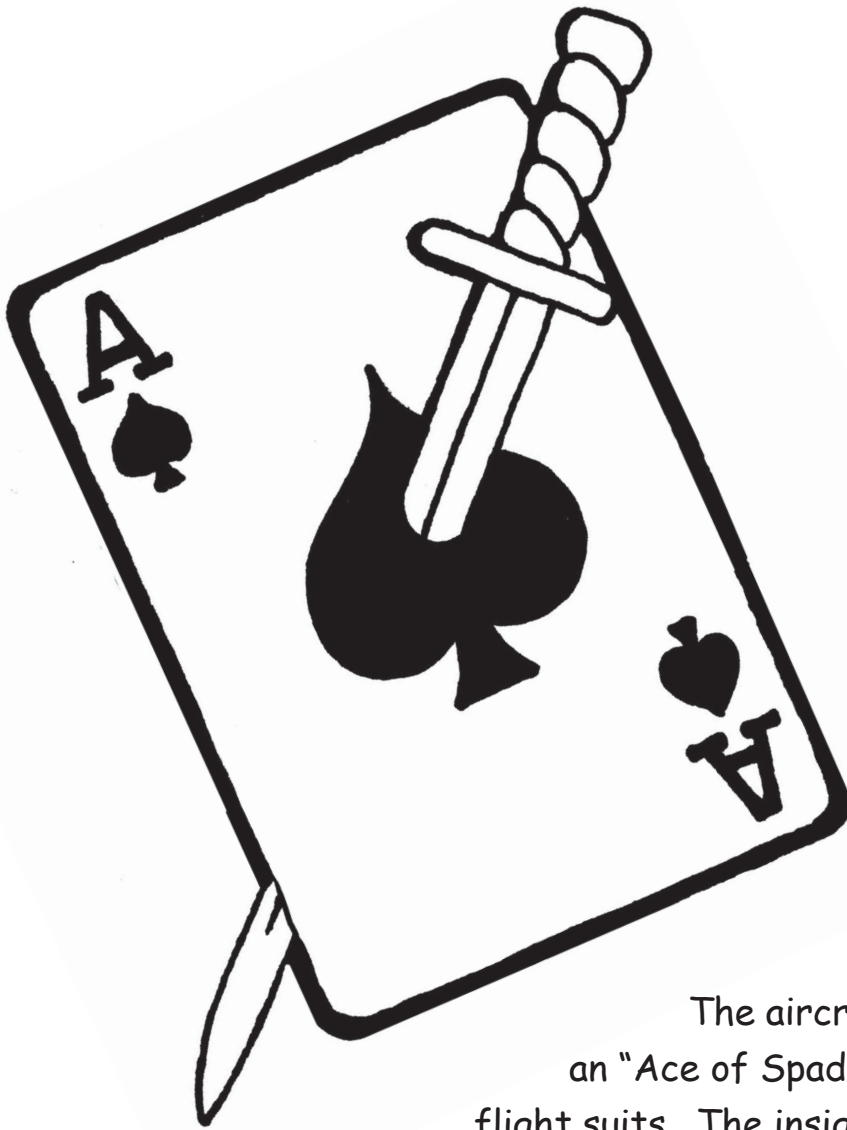


The 141st Air Refueling Wing
hasn't always flown KC-135's
and hasn't always been called the
141st Air Refueling Wing.
The flying unit actually began in
1924 at Felts Field in the
Spokane Valley. The first
planes the unit flew were
Curtiss JN6-A2's "Jennys."
The unit was know as the
116th Observation Squadron.



The flying unit has flown many different aircraft, both propeller and jet. Aircraft flown include observation, fighter, cargo, passenger and refueling. In 1949, the 116th was the first National Guard unit west of the Mississippi to receive jet aircraft—the F-84 Thunderjets.





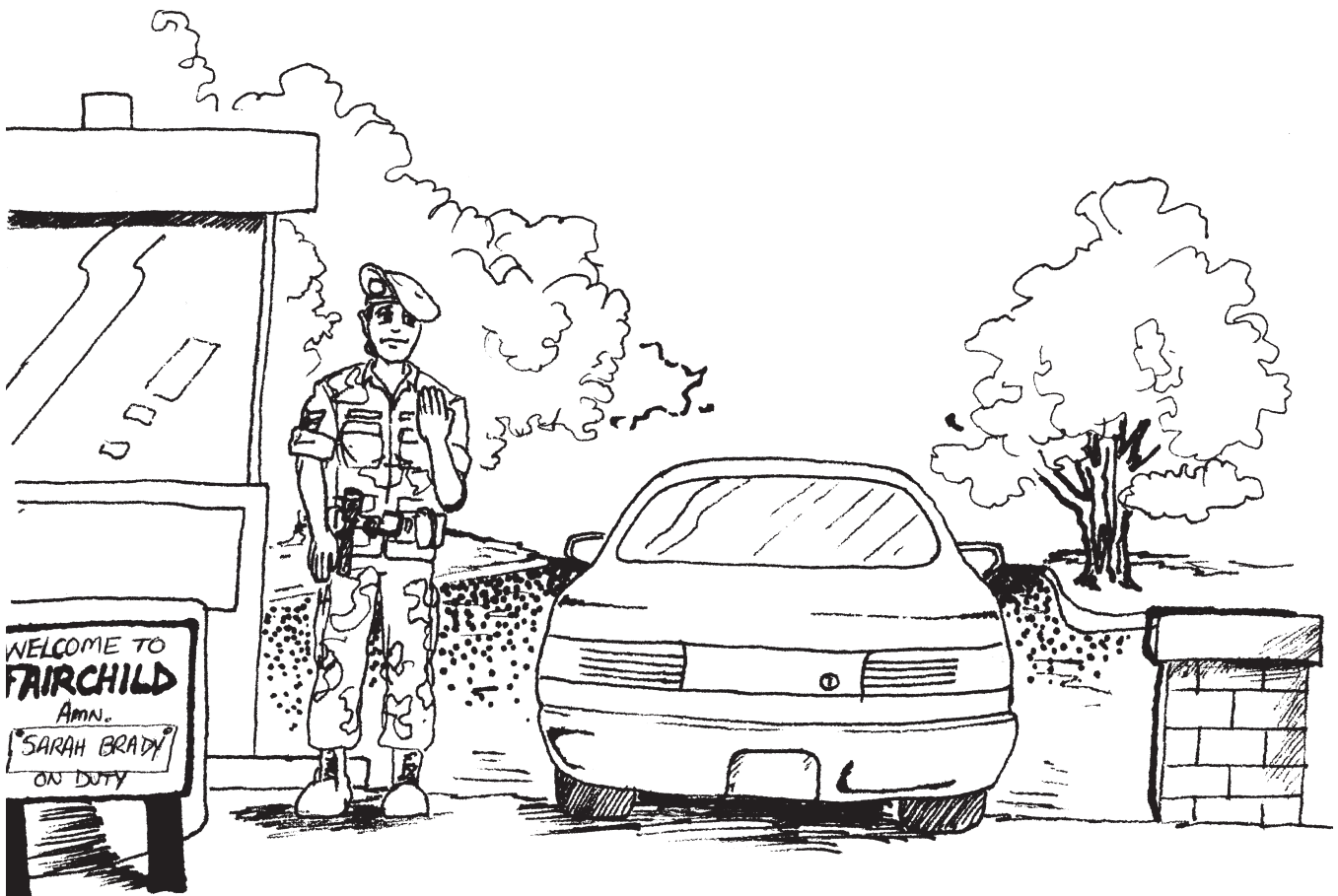
The aircrew members wear an "Ace of Spades" patch on their flight suits. The insignia had its origins in a late night squadron poker game in 1931. An ace of spades, otherwise known as the death card was thrown down on the table. A lieutenant drove a dagger through the center of the card.

Everyone agreed that the ace and dagger insignia portrayed the message "We mean business." The design was approved by the Pentagon and has been used by the aircrew ever since.

The unit patch worn by all members of the 141st Air Refueling Wing shows Mt. St. Helens on it. The unit responded to cleaning up ash in several eastern Washington communities after the volcano erupted in 1980.



Members of the 141st Air Refueling Wing, Washington Air National Guard, work on Fairchild Air Force Base. To get to the Air National Guard buildings, you have to first come through the gate to Fairchild. A military security policeman or policewoman must approve of your entry by waving or saluting you to drive your vehicle on the base.



Most of the people who belong to the 141st Air Refueling Wing of the Washington Air National Guard live in or near Spokane with their families. Some work full time at their jobs, but most work one weekend a month and 15 days of annual training. These people also have other jobs in many different professions and families. Some are teachers, nurses, lawyers, business owners, computer technicians, bankers, mechanics, and college students. Many of you may have friends whose mothers or fathers are in the Air National Guard.



We hope you enjoyed this book. Feel free to print out and color.